

Dear Physician:

Welcome to the second edition of the Industrial Medical Council's Physician's Guide to Medical Practice in the California Workers' Compensation System.

This book has been written and updated for the treating and evaluating physician whose role in the workers' compensation system has never been more important.

The treating physicians have always been primarily responsible for facilitating the injured workers' recovery and return to work. In the past, their role as an evaluator was limited. However, due to recent changes in the law made by the Legislature, the treating physicians must now also complete a medical evaluation report which may be pivotal in determining their patient's eligibility for workers' compensation benefits.

Qualified Medical Evaluators who complete formal medical-legal reports are expected to provide objective conclusions based on their clinical examination. Their reports must clearly establish subjective and objective factors of disability so that entities such as the Disability Evaluation Unit can rate permanent disability and parties can resolve their differences.

This book is intended to assist both the treating physicians and the medical-legal evaluators (Qualified Medical Evaluators) in carrying out these roles.

Although some have maintained their criticism of the compensation system and, in particular, physicians who practice within it, the recent reforms have resolved many of the more contentious areas and served to improve the delivery of benefits to injured workers through the state.

Once again, we dedicate this Physician's Guide to the thousands of physicians who are committed to making the system work more efficiently. To each and all of them, we express our gratitude and commitment that the IMC will continue to assist them in whatever manner possible to make their jobs a little easier.

D. Allan MacKenzie, M. D.
Executive Medical Director
Industrial Medical Council

John C. Duncan
Acting Director
Department of Industrial Relations

Richard Pitts, D. O.
Co-Chair
Industrial Medical Council

Gayle A. Walsh, D. C.
Co-Chair
Industrial Medical Council